In re Patent Application of:
DE LAENDER ET AL.
Serial No. **10/660,067**
Filing Date: **September 11, 2003**
_____/

In the Claims:

Claims 1-63 (Cancelled).

64. (Currently Amended) A ~~pallet,~~ pallet comprising:

at least one top support member adapted to support cargo~~, wherein said top support member has a top surface and a bottom surface~~;

at least one bottom support member ~~having a top surface and a bottom surface; and~~

a plurality of solid support blocks for separating the at least one ~~positioned between the bottom surface of the~~ top and bottom support members ~~member and the top surface of the bottom support member, wherein the blocks are spaced apart a sufficient distance to receive~~ so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween; ~~and~~

each solid support block comprising a composite material comprising at least one cellular material and at least one thermal plastic material, and having exposed outer surfaces devoid of any openings for completely defining a fastener area; and

a plurality of fasteners for fastening ~~that are provided to fasten~~ the at least one top and bottom support members ~~member and the at least bottom support member~~ to the plurality of ~~the~~ solid support blocks~~, wherein the plurality of fasteners consist of nails,~~ via the fastener areas.

~~wherein the solid support blocks are formed from a composite material comprising at least one cellular material~~

~~having particles and at least one thermoplastic material~~.

65. (Currently Amended) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the plurality of solid support blocks ~~comprise~~ comprises three groups of ~~nine support~~ blocks, wherein a first group of ~~three~~ support blocks is ~~are~~ positioned in a first row adjacent a first edge of the pallet, a second group of ~~three~~ support blocks is ~~are~~ positioned in a second row across the center of the pallet, and a third group of ~~three~~ support blocks is ~~are~~ positioned in a third row adjacent a second edge of the pallet.

66. (Currently Amended) The pallet according to claim 65, wherein the first, second and third rows are positioned substantially parallel to each other and are aligned so that the support blocks guide the ~~a~~ lifting member into a lifting position under the at least one top support member.

67. (Currently Amended) The pallet according to claim 65, ~~wherein the top support member comprises~~ further comprising ~~at least~~ three cross supports positioned generally parallel to each other, wherein the first, second, and third rows of support blocks support the three cross supports, and wherein the at least one top support member is configured as ~~further comprises~~ a plate coupled to a top surface of the three cross supports ~~and forming the top surface of the top support member~~.

68. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the thermoplastic material is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene and polyethylene.

69. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 68, wherein the polyethylene has a density between about 0.9 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.98 grams per cubic centimeter.

70. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 68, wherein the polyethylene is selected from the group consisting of a linear low density polyethylene, an ultra low density polyethylene, a low density polyethylene, a high density polyethylene, and an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene.

71. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 68, wherein the polypropylene is formed from the group consisting of homopolymers and copolymers having densities between about 0.8 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.99 grams per cubic centimeter.

72. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the thermoplastic material is a thermosetting resin selected from the group consisting of polyesters, epoxies and vinylesters.

73. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the cellular material has particles sizes between about 0.1 mm and about 1 mm.

Claim 74 (Cancelled).

75. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the cellular material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycles paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

Claim 76 (Cancelled).

77. (Currently Amended) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein at least one of the plurality of solid support blocks comprises ~~comprise~~ first and second substantially flat surfaces located on opposite ends of a ~~the~~ longitudinal axis.

78. (Currently Amended) The pallet according to claim 77, wherein the at least one ~~of the plurality of~~ solid support block ~~blocks comprise~~ further comprises third and fourth substantially flat surfaces ~~positioned on sides of the support block~~ between the opposite ends of the longitudinal axis.

79. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the plurality of solid support blocks have a

cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of an oval, a teardrop, an egg shape, an elongated hexagon, a diamond shape and a kite shape, defining a longitudinal axis of the solid support block.

80. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the at least one cellular material includes particle sizes between about 0.05 mm and about 4 mm.

81. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein a concentration of the cellular material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.

82. (New) A pallet comprising:

a plurality of top support members adapted to support cargo;

a plurality of bottom support members;

a plurality of oval-shaped solid support blocks for separating the plurality of top and bottom support members so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween;

each solid support block comprising a composite material comprising at least one cellular material and at least one thermal plastic material, and having exposed outer surfaces devoid of any openings for completely defining a fastener area; and

a plurality of nails for fastening the top and bottom support members to the plurality of solid support blocks via the fastener areas.

83. (New) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the plurality of solid support blocks comprises three groups of blocks, wherein a first group of support blocks is positioned in a first row adjacent a first edge of the pallet, a second group of support blocks is positioned in a second row across the center of the pallet, and a third group of support blocks is positioned in a third row adjacent a second edge of the pallet.

84. (New) The pallet according to claim 83, wherein said plurality of top support members comprises at least three cross supports positioned generally parallel to each other, wherein the first, second, and third rows of support blocks support the three cross supports.

85. (New) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the thermoplastic material is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene and polyethylene.

86. (New) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the thermoplastic material is a thermosetting resin selected from the group consisting of polyesters, epoxies and vinylesters.

87. (New) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the cellular material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycles paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

88. (New) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein a concentration of the cellular material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.

89. (New) A method for making a pallet comprising at least one top support member adapted to support cargo and at least one bottom support member, and a plurality of oval-shaped solid support blocks for separating the at least one top and bottom support members so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween, the method comprising:

forming each oval-shaped solid support block to comprise a composite material comprising at least one cellular material and at least one thermal plastic material, and having exposed outer surfaces devoid of any openings for completely defining a fastener area; and

fastening the at least one top and bottom support members with a plurality of nails to the plurality of oval-shaped solid support blocks via the fastener areas.

90. (New) The method according to claim 89, wherein the thermoplastic material is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene and polyethylene.

91. (New) The method according to claim 90, wherein the polyethylene has a density between about 0.9 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.98 grams per cubic centimeter.

92. (New) The method according to claim 90, wherein the polypropylene is formed from the group consisting of homopolymers and copolymers having densities between about 0.8 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.99 grams per cubic centimeter.

93. (New) The method according to claim 89, wherein the thermoplastic material is a thermosetting resin selected from the group consisting of polyesters, epoxies and vinylesters.

94. (New) The method according to claim 89, wherein the cellular material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycles paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

95. (New) The method according to claim 89, wherein a concentration of the cellular material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.